THE BATTLE OF THE POETS.

AN

Heroick POEM.

In TWO CANTO'S.

Bella per Aonios *plus quam* Civilia *Campos*
—— Canimus. LUCAN.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane.*

MDCCXXV.

POEMS

AN

Heroick POEM.

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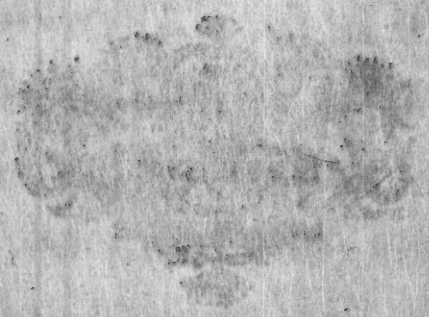

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MDCCXX.

THE BATTLE OF THE POETS.

CANTO I.

THY Foreſt, *Windſor*, and the dreadful Day,
That ſwept ſuch Numbers of our Bards away,
The happy Few that Home with Conqueſt came,
The penſive Many that return'd with Shame,
I ſing. Indulge, *Calliope*, my Verſe,
While I the Horrors of the War rehearſe;
How Poets doubly in their Works were ſlain,
When the big Volumes cover'd all the Plain;
How little Witlings, like Enthuſiaſts, fought,
For the ſame Cauſe, they knew not why, they wrote.
Firſt, Goddeſs, for thou know'ſt, inſtruct my Tongue,
To tell the Source whence the Diſſention ſprung.
Phœbus from high beheld, with Patience, long,
The Luſt of Int'reſt, and the Trade of Song;
He ſaw the jilting Tricks that Fortune play'd,
Obſerv'd the partial Jumble Chance had made;

How

How ſome the Meteors of the Vulgar flew,
While greater Merit ſilently withdrew.
Reſolv'd no longer ſuch Affronts to bear,
That each the Lawrels he deſerv'd might wear,
Thus, calling to his Aid fair *Maia*'s Son,
The ever-youthful God of Verſe begun.
Fly, *Hermes*, fly, to that diſtinguiſh'd Shore,
Where *Dryden* late *Apollo*'s Lawrels wore;
Thus ſays the Delphic God, to all proclaim,
That plead the Sanction of a Poet's Name,
Long has Confuſion ravag'd round the Plain,
And Diſcord rul'd among the Muſe's Train;
Without Diſtinction, to the Art's Diſgrace,
The greater gives the leſſer Genius place;
Hence who are ſtrenuous to reſtore their Right,
Are thus by *Phœbus* ſummon'd to the Fight.
His Arms let each advent'rous Chief prepare,
And I the God will be in Perſon there,
To ſee that all with Juſtice may ſubmit,
By Force of Learning, and by Dint of Wit.
To him who longeſt ſhall maintain the Field,
This very Chaplet on my Brows I yield.
May ev'ry Son of Verſe my Will obey,
On *Windſor*'s Foreſt to decide the Day.
He ſpoke, and *Hermes*, quick at his Command,
Convey'd the Meſſage thro' the Muſe's Land.
All thank'd the God for his Indulgence ſhown,
For all were certain of the Lawrel Crown;

There's

There's not a Bard but panted for the Day,
From POPE and PHILIPS, down to TRAPP and GAY.
All view their Forces, and correct each Line,
And ſwear at ev'ry Word, *The Chaplet's mine.*
Goddeſs, of Verſe ſupreme, immortal Maid,
Lend in the greateſt Time of Need thine Aid;
O'er all the Labours of my Song preſide,
And thro' the arduous Task thy Herald guide;
With Juſtice let my Praiſe, or Cenſure, be,
For ev'ry Poet's Worth is known to thee;
And firſt the Leaders, and their Forces tell,
Allies, and Neuters, for thou know'ſt them well.
Firſt on the Plain a mighty General came,
In Merit great, but greater far in Fame,
In ſhining Arms advanc'd, and POPE his Name.
A pond'rous Helm he wore, adorn'd with Care,
And for the Plume *Belinda's* raviſh'd Hair.
Arm'd at all Points the Warrior took the Field,
With *Windſor's* Foreſt painted on his Shield.
Next him approach'd, whoſe Glory ſhin'd from far,
WESLEY, and on his Shield the *Sex's War.*
Then march'd in Order, FENTON, YOUNGE, and DART,
With, each, a ſhare of Genius, and of Art;
Beneath their Arms, vainly ſecure of Praiſe,
Tranſlations, Poems, and a Guard of Plays.
Three Captains next appear, TRAPP, CIBBER, GAY,
Heading a Thouſand Witlings of a Day.

In warlike Order rang'd, the Chief ſurvey'd
His fighting Sons of Verſe, and thus he ſaid.
Brothers of Song, and Fellow-Soldiers, hear;
We've yet no Foes to dread, nor Cauſe to fear;
Diſmay'd perhaps they Battle now decline,
And own, without a War, the Chaplet mine.
But think not, Friends, I ſhall engroſs the Praiſe,
No, let each Chieftain ſhare his Worth of Bays.
But if at laſt ye ſhould the Foe behold,
Be wiſely valiant, not too raſhly bold.
Beware of WELSTED, in the warring Throng,
Wiſe as *Ulyſſes*, and as *Ajax* ſtrong;
Avoid his Arm, nor too preſumptuous be,
For he's a Victim worthy only me.
Or ſhould you PHILIPS in the Battle ſpy,
'Tis Death to meet him, and 'tis wiſe to fly.
Belinda be the word; and when I nod,
Review your Forces, and invoke the God.
So ſpoke the Chief; and ſoon was heard from far,
The noiſy Promiſe of a dreadful War;
With Shouts, and loud Huzza's, they pierc'd the Sky,
And ſeem'd to ſpeak a hot Engagement nigh.
HILL uſher'd in a party-colour'd Train,
In Merit equal to himſelf, and vain.
His braſen Coat of Mail was cover'd through,
With Stripes of Silk, each of a various hue;
While Sattin Streamers o'er his Helmet play,
To emulate the Sun, and paint the Day.

Upon

Upon his Helmet's Front was *Gideon* plac'd;
And his broad Shield a Round of Titles grac'd.
Then for the Fight a motly Train prepare,
Reſolv'd the Fortunes of their Guide to ſhare;
In mimick Armour near their Prince they ſtand;
And *Amazonta* at her Lord's Right-Hand;
With Hundreds more at Diſtance on the Green;
Bards ſeldom heard of, and as ſeldom ſeen.
As thus they ſtood, quick to their Army ran
A Meſſenger from POPE, and thus began:
Thus from our Leader was I bid to ſay,
To you who come Spectators of the Day;
To ſome ſecure Retreat at diſtance go,
Nor ſtop the Paſſage of th' expected Foe,
Where you with Safety may behold from far,
If ſuch is your Deſire, the coming War.
He ſpoke, and bow'd; then to his Prince return'd,
While HILL with Envy, and Reſentment, burn'd.
Spectators of the Day! Heart-ſtabbing Sound!
But Oh! my Sword ſhall ſtrike a deeper Wound!
Rage-giving Words! Spectators of the Day!
But this ſhall do much more than he can ſay.
And then he ſtorms, and wields his Sword in Air,
And threatens POPE; but lo! no POPE is there.
So have I ſeen a Bull in angry Mood,
Thirſty and raving for a Rival's Blood,

Beat

Beat with his Hoofs the Ground, and tear the Plain,
And, lowing, gore th' impaſſive Trees in vain.
As full of Anguiſh all the Soldiers ſtand,
And with Impatience wait their Chief's Command,
Revolving Vengeance in their tortur'd Mind,
Surpriz'd they ſee their Deſtiny behind;
The big Reſolves, that they had plan'd before,
Are fled, and they are now themſelves no more.
Fearful to fight, and yet aſham'd to run,
They wait the Dangers that they cannot ſhun.
WELSTED to War a youthful Army led,
Born on *Parnaſſus*, on *Parnaſſus* bred;
Himſelf a Godlike Chief, deriv'd from *Jove*,
Whom much *Apollo*, and the *Muſes*, love.
Upon his Helm the *Roman* Swan appears,
And *Horace* ſhining thro' a Length of Years.
Upon his Shield's the happy Grove below,
Where all that ſing like him are ſure to go.
And there *Lavinia* by her Dream betray'd,
And *Acon* ſmiling on the raviſh'd Maid.
Him BECKINGHAM obey'd, from *Phœbus* ſprung,
And, like *Apollo*, beardleſs, fair, and young;
His Chief's belov'd, the *Muſe*'s early Care,
And where he goes, his Guard, the *Muſe*, is there.
Next PITT advanc'd, skill'd in the Charms of Rhyme,
Himſelf the *Vida* of the preſent Time.
Theſe AMHURST join'd, in Song a blooming Youth,
A ſtrict Adherer to the Cauſe of Truth.

Him

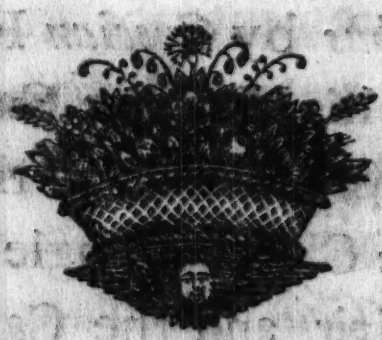
Him JACOB follow'd, with his *curious Dame*,
And in his tragick Muſe ſecure of Fame.
Next MOTTLEY came, of *Heliconian* Birth,
Whoſe greateſt Fauſt is Diffidence of Worth.
To theſe their Chieftain in a Strain begun,
That ſpoke the Prince, Companion, Friend, in One.
Friends, and Allies, firſt let my Thanks be paid
To you, who bring me your ſpontaneous Aid.
What may not I preſume, when thus I ſee,
Worthies like you neglect the Wreath for me?
Well may I ſoar the Lawrel Crown to gain,
When ſuch as you aſſert my Right to reign.
Follow to Arms my Chiefs, ſecure of Fame,
And ſacred be to War *Zelinda*'s Name.
He ended thus; then they prepare to go,
And cut their Paſſage to the diſtant Foe.
HILL ſaw them glitter terrible from far,
And trembled at their dazling Gleam of War.
With a forc'd Courage to his Men he cry'd,
On let us march in Terror-giving Pride;
And *Amazonta* never leave my Side.
He ſpoke, and lo! they met upon the Plain,
And WELSTED ey'd him with a ſtern Diſdain;
To conquer him he left his Chiefs the Fame,
And, ſmiling, bore away the Captive Dame.
In JACOB, HILL a Match unequal found,
Nor with his *Gideon* could maintain his Ground;

All his Artillery of Wit he drew,
Which at one Line of his to Shatters flew ;
While Pitt, and Mottley, with the reſt engage,
And routed Hundreds with a ſingle Page.
Thus with Succeſs their Arms begun the Day,
And thus to nobler Conqueſts clear'd their way.
Mean while the Chief, the brave *Virago* ſent,
Safe with a Convoy to his Royal Tent.
Scarce had he gave his Orders, but was ſeen,
Pope, and his Army, marching o'er the Green.
Forward he ſprung to meet th' approaching Foe,
Eager his great Antagoniſt to know ;
Reſolv'd with him ſingly to try his Fate,
With him of whom Report had ſpoke ſo great.
The Armies meet, the Word the Leaders give,
And all the Signal for the Fight receive.
Satyrs, Epiſtles, Verſes to the Fair ;
Songs, Epigrams, and Plays, are thrown in Air :
Tranſlations, Elegies, the Epick Strain,
Are made the Sport of Winds, and hide the Plain.
Some are made ſtronger than they were before,
And ſome are forc'd to fall, to riſe no more.
Cibber, and Gay, upon the Ground are thrown,
And all their Labours periſh--------all their own.
One cries aloud upon a noble Peer ;
The other wiſhes that his Chief was near.
Relentleſs Youth, Cibber to Amhurst cry'd,
The *careleſs Husband*'s ſav'd ; but Cibber dy'd.

Gay ſwears to Beckingham, but all in vain,
He'll ne'er attempt the Tragick Scene again.
Fluſh'd with Succeſs, the youthful Warrior ſprung,
And thought himſelf alone a Match for Younge;
Alas! he finds the raſh Miſtake too late,
And by inglorious Flight eludes his Fate;
He left, for Fortune to his Flight was kind,
Only the Suff'rings of *Rapin* behind.
With Zeal tranſported for the *Mantuan* Swain,
Pitt chac'd his vile Tranſlator o'er the Plain;
Reſolv'd to right the injur'd *Virgil*'s Wrong,
By Trapp ſo alter'd in the *Engliſh* Song;
Tortur'd, and mangled, in his wretched Proſe,
More than *Deiphobus* by *Grecian* Foes.
Without Remorſe his Men the Caitiff bind,
And turn his uſeleſs Volumes to the Wind.
Mean while the Chiefs a ſingle Combat fought,
With the ſame Spirit, and the Care they wrote;
A dreadful Conflict they awhile maintain'd;
But Pope, at laſt, with his own Blood was ſtain'd.
When he his Foe impenetrable found,
Scarce had he Courage to ſupport his Ground;
But ſince of Arms he had the larger Store,
He from his Wounds grew ſtronger than before.
And now the Sun darted a feeble Ray,
And left a doubtful Field, a doubtful Day;

But yet the Rage of War continued high,
Till thickeſt Darkneſs had obſcur'd the Sky;
Each Hero ſcarce his Adverſary ſees,
Nor could they well diſtinguiſh Men from Trees.
The Chiefs the Signal give the Fight to end,
And thus the Battle, till the Morn, ſuſpend.

The End of the Firſt CANTO.



CANTO

CANTO II.

WHILE in their Camp retir'd both Armies lay,
Some panting, others fearful, for the Day,
EUSDEN, a Lawrel'd Bard, by Fortune rais'd,
By very few been read, by fewer prais'd;
From place to place, forlorn and breathleſs, flies,
And offers Bribes immenſe for ſtrong Allies.
In vain he ſpent the Day, the Night in vain;
For all the Laureat, and his Bribes, diſdain.
With Heart dejected he return'd alone,
Upon the Banks of *Cham*, to make his moan;
Reſolv'd to ſpend his future Days in eaſe,
And only toil in Verſe Himſelf to pleaſe;
To fly the noiſy Candidates of Fame,
Nor ever court again ſo coy a Dame.
But DENNIS, lo! the modern Author's Dread,
Who captive Wit has oft in Triumph led,
The Scourge of Fools, who gives to Worth its due,
And always to the Cauſe of Vertue true,
Odious of late to each Pretender grown,
But to the Wiſe his hoary Judgment's known,

Forth to the Field with a new Ardor ſprung,
And in the Winter of his Labours young;
Like *Diomede*, deſign'd to bear away
More Honours by the Night than ſome by Day.
Dauntleſs he ranges round the Field for Spoil,
Nor wants *Ulyſſes* to partake his Toil.
Silent he goes where WELSTED's Army lay,
The Terror of their Forces to ſurvey;
There by the Blaze of their nocturnal Fires,
He views their Arms, and, as he views, admires;
But of a ſudden on his Brows appear,
The Frowns of Wrath, that ſhew'd the Danger near.
Backward he ſtarted, and his Sword he drew,
And wounded WELSTED's * Preface thro' and thro'.
His Boſom ſwell'd with Rage, but all in vain,
For ev'ry Wound he gave ſoon clos'd again.
So raſh *Tydides*, mounted in his Carr,
Pierc'd with his guilty Spear the God of War;
But ſoon the Parts, that were divided, join,
And ſhew'd the Hero God was all divine.

Thence with a ſullen Gloom to POPE he went,
And paſs'd the Guards to reach the General's Tent.
And firſt by DART the Critic bends his way,
By whom the *Roman* Elegiac lay;
But not the ſame that wrote in *Cæſar*'s Days,
The Stile ſo barren, and ſo rough the Lays;
Not by the ſoft, polite *Tibullus* known,
So chang'd the whole, it is almoſt his own.

* *A Diſſertation concerning the Perfection of the* Engliſh *Language, the State of Poetry, &c. prefixed to Mr.* Welſted's *Poems.*

But

But other Lines his juſt Attention drew,
And charm'd his Senſes to a nearer View;
He ſaw what Juſtice to the * Dead was ſhown;
And as he prais'd their Merit, ſhew'd his own.
On YOUNGE he enter'd, whom he ſleeping found,
With all his Works in noble Splendor round.
Upon his ** lateſt Rhymes he drew his Arms,
Enrag'd at Trifles that debaſe the Charms.
The reſt he left untouch'd, to Merit true,
The Beauties many, and the Faults but few.
To FENTON's Charms he was exceſſive kind,
One of an hundred Lines he left behind.
After he gaz'd awhile on WESLEY's *** Song,
Tho' few its Numbers, yet in Value ſtrong,
From thence he augur'd an illuſtrious Fame,
And the ſure Proſpect of a greater Name.
Next to their mighty Chief he turn'd his Eye,
By whom he ſaw the deathleſs *Grecian* lye;
And *Shakeſpear* ſtood, ſtupend'ous Ruins, by.
Oh! mercenary Bard, the Critic cry'd,
For leſſer Faults than theſe have Thouſands dy'd;
Too dire an Inſtance of what Gold can do,
That thy own Country-man muſt ſuffer too!
Too weighty are thy Crimes for me to bear.
He ſpoke, and left the guilty Volumes there.
But in his other Works, what Beauties ſhine!
While ſweeteſt Muſic dwells in ev'ry Line;

* *Weſtminſter Abbey, A Poem.* ** *The Univerſal Paſſion.* *** *The Battle of the Sexes.*

Theſe

Theſe he admir'd, on theſe he ſtamp'd his Praiſe,
And bad them live to brighten future Days.
And now with Safety from their Camp he came,
And caſt their Labours in a friendly Flame;
In Triumph from the Field he bends his way,
And leaves to others to decide the Day.
The Battle he forbore, for well he knew,
The Foe was potent, and his Days but few,
Reſolv'd to keep the double Wreath his own,
Nor part the Lawrel from the Ivy Crown.

As on he went, he ſaw approaching nigh,
The Form of one that was, or ſeem'd, a Spy;
He ſeiz'd him as he trembling ſtood with Fear,
And thus demands the Cauſe that brought him here.
Tell me, raſh Youth, for ſuch you ſeem to me,
What can your Buſneſs in the Foreſt be,
Thus arm'd, alone, now ſcarce the Night is fled,
To kill the Living, or to ſtrip the Dead?
Tell me, for 'tis in vain to hope to fly;
Your Name, your Purpoſe; or expect to dye.
He ſpoke; the Youth, with Modeſty, reply'd,
Forbid it Gods your Will ſhould be deny'd.
By ſome I'm rank'd among the Sons of Fame,
Of noble Birth, and SAVAGE is my Name;
Hither I come by other Motives led,
The Living nor to kill, nor ſtrip the Dead;
Nor vainly conſcious of my Worth I come,
Thoughtful to bear *Apollo*'s Lawrels home;

But Oh! Report, (forgive a falling Tear,
'Tis much too little for a Loſs ſo dear.)
Speaks of a Friend, that fell, a Friend ſo true,
That makes the Hazard that I run his due;
His Body I deſign'd to take away,
That undiſtinguiſh'd lies with common Clay.
He ended thus, and thus the Critic ſaid,
Grateful young Man, well ſhall thy Care be paid.
Where we ſo great a Senſe of Friendſhip find,
We muſt conclude it from a noble Mind.
But Oh! no longer for thy Friend complain;
Fate has decreed his Fall; thy Grief's in vain;
And for his Loſs let this a Comfort be,
The World ſhall ſoon begin to ſmile on thee.
The preſent Court ſhall make Deſert its Care,
And ev'ry Art ſhall find a Patron there.
He ſpoke, and ſoon they ſaw the Morn from far,
And diſtant Heroes riſing to the War;
They knew the Danger would attend the ſtay,
And to the Town they both direct their way.
And now the Brave begin to hail the Light,
While Cowards, ſighing, wiſh it ſtill was Night.
Freſh as the Morn the Chieftains ſtart to Fame,
And rouſe the Soldiers with their *Fair One*'s Name.
Belinda, and *Zelinda*, dear to Love,
Nymphs ever-bleſs'd in Song, fly round the Grove;
Such Magic Forces in their Names are found,
They all are eager to revive the Sound;

A Sound that frees their tortur'd Minds from Care,
And clears their clouded Brows of black Deſpair;
A Sound ſo much the plunder'd Warriors charms,
It makes them all forget their Loſs of Arms;
Eas'd of their uſeleſs Lumber now they go,
At more Advantage to engage the Foe.

In dread Array both Armies meet again,
And long a fierce, and equal War, maintain;
Till AMHURST drives off FENTON from the Field;
And AMHURST is by WESLEY forc'd to yield.
JACOB, and YOUNGE, in Tragic Forces ſtrong,
Find in each other a juſt Match in Song.
There PITT and DART, engag'd in ſingle Fight,
War, by Example, in their Leader's Sight.

And now from far three Neutral Troops are ſeen,
PACK, SEWELL, TICKELL, marching o'er the Green;
To POPE, and WELSTED, they direct their way;
And each a thouſand little Wits obey.
The firſt a boiſt'rous Chief, in Body ſtrong,
A Man of War, and not unbleſs'd in Song.
The next in Verſe had labour'd long in vain,
Till he ſucceeded in the Tragic Strain;
Till from the Grave he reſcued *Raleigh*'s Name,
And nobly built his own on *Raleigh*'s Fame.
The Third by great, but doubtful, Honours known,
And oft adorn'd with Glories not his own;
So bright, ſo dazling, was the Helm he bore,
Fit for a *Dryden* to have worn before.

As ready for the War the Chiefs appear,
All, of a ſudden, are unnerv'd with Fear.
PHILIPS approach'd high in a Martial Carr,
Without Allies, and was himſelf a War.
His Helm was made with more than Human Care,
And *Pindar*, with his *Theban* Lyre, was there.
Upon his Shield the deathleſs *Mantuan* ſtands,
And, bowing, gives his Pipe to *Britiſh* Hands.
There ſtood *Oreſtes*, in his wild Deſpair;
There *Glouceſter's Duke*; and *Gwendolen the Fair.*
Thus arm'd, upon a thouſand Wits he trod;
He drives along, and ſeems of Verſe the God.
So great the Terror few had ſtrength to run,
And all, who could, the certain Danger ſhun.
TICKELL he ſtop'd, ſwift flying o'er the Field,
And ſtrip'd him of the Arms he could not wield.
Addiſon's Helm among his Arms he ſpy'd,
And thus remorſeleſs to th' Impoſter cry'd.
Here ends thy Kingdom, and thy Date of Fame;
Robb'd of thy borrow'd Pride, no more a Name;
Thus by my Hands ſhalt thou unpity'd go.
Then plung'd him headlong in the Stream below.
WELSTED and POPE alone his Fury ſtaid;
When thus the God of Verſe to WELSTED ſaid.
Oh! Bard belov'd, confeſs'd *Apollo* ſee,
(For all *Parnaſſus* is concern'd for thee.)
To thee I come, to warn thee from the Field,
Well tho' you fought, you muſt the Chaplet yield;

Nor

Nor at the Fortune of the Day repine,
For equal Honours ſhall e're long be thine.
Go, and be certain of *Apollo*'s Aid.
He bow'd, and, with a Sigh, the God obey'd.

Mean while the Muſes all their Care engage,
To ſave their Fav'rite from the Warrior's Rage;
They ſent the lovely Nymphs of *Windſor*'s Plain,
Whom he had ſung in his immortal Strain,
Safe to their Grotto they their Bard convey,
While PHILIPS bears the Lawrel Crown away.

Thus he a great and eaſy Conqueſt gains;
And now on Earth the great *Apollo* reigns.

The END.